

**Advocating Effectively for
Chickens and Turkeys Bred
for Meat Production:
Bringing Their Hidden
Suffering to Light**

A Presentation by Karen Davis, PhD
President of United Poultry Concerns



*Photo by Frank Johnston,
The Washington Post*

The reality is that the cruelest, most brutal and atrocious industrial farming conditions and practices have become the standard by which so-called humane treatment of farmed animals ... are being measured. The term "humane" as applied to farmed animals is a true example of Orwellian Doublespeak. — Karen Davis PhD, President, United Poultry Concerns



BORIS

*You never really got to see
The real turkey inside of me.*

*The one with a body my frame could have supported,
The one with feet where my toes weren't aborted.*

*The one who could eat his food with a beak
Like a real bird and not a geek.*

*The one who wanted to have a mate
But was too large to propagate.*

*My life had one saving grace
And it was Karen Davis's sanctuary place.*

*Yes, a human too was she
But one who took care of me.*

*I only knew fear and pain,
Now happiness did remain.*

*Thank you Karen for giving me the chance
To spread my feathers and do a turkey prance.*

*In my last year, I almost got to be
The real turkey inside of me.*

—Love, Boris



The Problem

A difficulty in drawing public attention and sympathy to the plight of factory-farmed animals is that virtually every situation in which they appear is a mass situation.



"Enriched" cage facility, *NPR, Jan.26, 2012*



To the public eye, the sheer number and expanse of animals surrounded by metal, wires, dung, dander and dust renders them invisible and impersonal. Their misery is not perceived by most viewers, who are not socialized to perceive “food” animals as sensitive individuals with projects of their own of which they have been stripped.

From This:



Photo: Davida G. Breier

To This:



Megan Rieley looks over the current flock of 90,000—about two days away from market—that stretches as far as the eye can see in the family's three chicken houses.

Megan Rieley looks over the current flock of 90,000 – about two days away from market – that stretches as far as the eye can see in the family's three chicken houses.

Photo by David Harp

**From
This:**



**To
This:**



“Free-range organic” young turkeys with surgically mutilated beaks at Diestel Turkey Ranch, a supplier to Whole Foods.

They hear deathly silence or indistinguishable “noise.” They see a brownish sea of bodies without conflict, plot or endpoint.

By comparison, some situations do highlight the suffering and abuse of farmed animals more visibly and dramatically than others may do at first glance. For example:

- The “veal” calf whose solitary confinement stall and large sad eyes draw attention to himself as a desolate individual.



- The goose or duck being force fed for foie gras.



- The artificial insemination of turkeys and chickens used for breeding.



- The face of an individual animal as he or she is being slaughtered.



A “free-range” rooster being cut to death.

- Battery hens staring out of their cages.



Weaver Brothers Egg Farm in Versailles, Ohio

Photo by Mercy For Animals



- A single baby chick being debeaked



More Difficult for the Uninformed Viewer to Comprehend:

Unlike these more obvious and “dramatic” scenes of suffering, the misery of chickens and turkeys being raised for meat is hidden inside their bodies within the vast anonymous compounds in which they are confined. A reporter for *The Guardian* said that the thousands of chickens he saw in a chicken house he visited looked to him like “a sea of stationary grey objects.”

What is happening within this sea of bodies that look more dead than alive?



A Sea of Suffering

Delaware Chicken House
Photo by David Harp



- “The technology built into buildings and equipment is embodied genetically into the chicken itself.” – Bell and Weaver, *Commercial Chicken Meat and Egg Production*
- “These half-day-old chicks weigh less than an ounce apiece. In the next month and a half they will multiply that about 65 times.” – Tom Horton, “42-Day Wonders,” *Washingtonian*
- “These birds are all extremely unfit. There is also the interaction between their unfitness and their poor environment.” – Poultry researcher Dr. Ian Duncan

- “My chickens are all rotting in their insides.” – Oklahoma chicken farmer to Karen Davis
- “The sign of a good meat flock is the number of birds dying from heart attacks.” – Poultry farmer Catherine Baskin



How Can We Bring the Hidden Suffering of Chickens and Turkeys Bred for Meat into Public Consciousness? We can let people know that:

- Chickens and turkeys are the majority – 99 percent – of land animals slaughtered for food in the United States. Worldwide more than 40 billion chickens are slaughtered each year.
- Chickens are slaughtered as 6-week-old babies.
- Turkeys are slaughtered at 3 to 4 months old just out of their infancy.

- When people eat chicken breasts, wings and legs, they're consuming several chickens at a single meal compared to just part of a large animal like a cow or a pig at a single meal.
- Chickens and turkeys go to slaughter lame, sick, and in pain. They are infected with Salmonella, Campylobacter, E coli and other bacteria that make people sick with foodborne poisons that can lead to crippling arthritis later in life, even premature death.

- Birds slaughtered for food are excluded from the federal Humane Slaughter Act. The Act doesn't protect any animals regardless, but no legal status encourages slaughterhouse workers to treat birds even worse.

- Chickens, turkeys and ducks are *Not Stunned*. They are dragged upside down, fully conscious, through electrified water that paralyzes their muscles so that their feathers will come out more easily after they are dead. The birds in this photograph are in agonizing pain, but they can't move. Former Tyson chicken slaughterhouse worker Virgil Butler described their suffering: *“Their muscles don't work, but their eyes do and you can tell by them looking at you that they're scared to death.”*



“Stunned” birds photo by L. Parascandola

- Millions of chickens and turkeys are scalded alive after their throats are cut. Virgil Butler said that in the scald tank, “the chickens scream, kick, and their eyeballs pop out of their heads.”



Photo of throat-cut birds headed to the scald tank by Carol McCormick

- Since poultry products are the main source of foodborne illness in people, due to the filthy conditions they are raised in, slaughtered chickens and turkeys are soaked in toxic chemicals at the slaughterhouse. When people eat them, they are consuming these poisonous chemicals along with cancer-causing arsenic, which is fed to chickens to force them to become abnormally large by 6 weeks old.

Who are Chickens?

- *People who know chickens as friends know that these birds are not “all alike.” They know that, like all species with certain traits in common, chickens have individual personalities, distinctive identities, and unique ways of expressing themselves.*



**What a Chicken Can Be
When a Chicken is
(Almost) Free!**

Taylor Scott and Bella Mae the Hen

UPC Sanctuary Photo by Karen Davis



Toni and Joni share love & trust.



**Sugar was
rescued from
the chicken
industry to
live in UPC's
sanctuary in
Virginia.**



**Kokun and Potpo
were rescued
from a Perdue
chicken house to
enjoy life at
UPC's sanctuary.**

Photo by Karen Davis



**As animal advocates
we must hasten the
day when a trip to
the slaughterhouse**

Photo by Silvia Meriggi, Animals' Angels



**is over forever for
all birds and all
creatures.**

The Last Death Wagon



The Way of the Future



UPC Bus Poster, Washington, DC, 2013

**Compassion is
a Beautiful
Thing.**

United Poultry Concerns
www.UPC-online.org

**Choose
Vegan**



FREE AT LAST!



Photo: John H. Sheally,
The Virginian-Pilot,
Thanksgiving Day, 2004

“The future of protein is animal-free.”

"We believe the future of protein is animal-free. We want Beyond Meat to be sold as a meat alternative in places where you would ordinarily find meat. Whether that is in the meat case at your local grocery store or at your local fast food restaurant chain. This is very different from how meat alternatives are positioned today where you have to hunt them down in a separate refrigerated section far from areas where you would find meat." – Beyond Meat CEO Ethan Brown, May 21, 2013.



Karen Davis with UPC Sanctuary Chickens

Photo by Frank Johnston, The Washington Post



For more information, visit



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